

In 2014, the government made significant progress toward constitutional reform. Pending submission to and approval by the parliament, a number of proposed amendments—including replacing the current supervisor of elections with an electoral commission—may be put to a referendum in early 2015.

Grenada faces unsustainable debt levels and has yet to fully rebuild after devastation from a hurricane in 2004 that damaged almost 90 percent of homes on the islands and destroyed the country's main export crop, nutmeg. However, Grenada's economic outlook improved somewhat in 2014, as a Memorandum of Understanding on energy security was signed between Grenada and the United States in September. The United States will provide technical assistance to the country and encourage private investment as Grenada implements reform in its energy sector.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Political Rights: 38 / 40 [Key]

A. Electoral Process: 12 / 12

Grenada is governed under a parliamentary system. The bicameral Parliament consists of the directly elected, 15-seat House of Representatives, whose members serve five-year terms, and the 13-seat Senate appointed by the governor-general, 10 on the advice of the prime minister and 3 on the advice of the opposition leader. The prime minister is generally the leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives and is appointed by the governor-general, who represents the British monarch as head of state.

Early elections were held in 2013. In addition to Prime Minister Thomas's National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New National Party (NNP), the newly formed National United Front (NUF), representing a breakaway faction of the NDC, competed in the elections. Voter turnout was 87 percent. The elections gave a landslide victory to the NNP, which captured all 15 seats in the House of Representatives with 59 percent of the vote. The NDC received 41 percent of the vote and the NUF received less than 1 percent. Keith Mitchell, who had served as prime minister from 1995 to 2008, was sworn in as prime minister.

Observers from the Organization of American States (OAS) commended the government on its implementation of a new voter registration system. However, observers expressed concern over the lack of campaign financing regulations, and recommended a comprehensive review of the Representation of the Peoples Act, which governs the conduct of elections.

Due to the lack of parliamentary opposition after the elections, the governor-general appointed three former NDC ministers to the Senate. Cécile La Grenade was sworn in as Grenada's first female governor-general in May 2013. In September 2013, La Grenade dismissed the supervisor of elections, Judy Benoit, who had failed to comply with a cabinet-mandated decision to integrate the Electronic Government for Regional Integration Project (EGRIP) into the electoral computer system. Benoit claimed that the integration would infringe on the independent mandate of the Office of the Supervisor of Elections and violate the office's integrity. In October 2014, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Court of Appeal granted Benoit leave to pursue judicial review of her dismissal.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation: 16 / 16

Parties are free to form and operate. Grenada's main political parties are the center-left NDC and the conservative NNP, which regularly rotate in power. A number of smaller parties exist and competed in the last elections. These include the Grenada United Labour Party, the People's Labour Movement, and the recently formed NUF.

C. Functioning of Government: 10 / 12

Corruption remains a prominent issue in Grenada. The Prevention of Corruption Act and the Integrity in Public Life Act, the legislative core of Grenada's anticorruption efforts, were both passed in 2007. A decree passed in 2013 under the authority of the Integrity in Public Life Act mandated that all public officials declare their personal assets by April 3, 2014; as of that date, a number of officials had yet to comply.

In April 2014, an OAS monitoring body visited Grenada to assess its compliance with the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. The group made a number of recommendations, and Grenada continues to make efforts to conform to international anticorruption standards.

Civil Liberties: 51 / 60

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief: 15 / 16

The right to free expression is guaranteed in the constitution and is generally respected in practice. In July 2012, Grenada became the first Caribbean country to decriminalize defamation. However, seditious libel remains a criminal offense with a possible two-year prison sentence. In 2013, the government passed the Electronic Crimes Act, which provides a prison sentence of up to one year for "grossly offensive" electronic communications. The government subsequently responded to international pressure, announcing that it would amend the law to remove restrictions on free speech. In March 2014, the House of Representatives voted in favor of an amendment to the act, removing the three most controversial sections. While Grenada has no daily newspapers, there are several privately owned weeklies. The government owns a minority stake in a private corporation that operates the principal radio and television stations, and there are several independent stations.

Citizens of Grenada generally practice their religious beliefs freely, and there are no official restrictions on academic freedom.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights: 11 / 12

Constitutional guarantees of freedoms of assembly and association are respected. Independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are free to operate. Workers have the right to strike and to organize and bargain collectively, though employers are not legally bound to recognize a union if a majority of workers do not join.

F. Rule of Law: 12 / 16

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, which is generally respected by the government. Grenada is a member of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States court system and is a charter member of the Caribbean Court of Justice, but still relies on the Privy Council in London as its final court of appeal.

Detainees and defendants are guaranteed a range of legal rights, which are mostly respected in practice. However, Grenada's prisons are significantly overcrowded. In 2011, five police officers allegedly beat to death Oscar Bartholomew, a Grenadian-Canadian man on holiday. In 2013, manslaughter charges against the five officers were dropped, and they returned to work pending a coroner's inquest into the death, which has been continuously delayed.

Grenada's Criminal Code criminalizes same-sex sexual activity with prison sentences of up to 10 years, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people face significant societal discrimination.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights: 13 / 16

The constitution prohibits gender discrimination, and Grenada's Employment Act (1999) and Education Act (2002) prohibit discrimination based on sex. However, cultural norms perpetuate discrimination in practice. New domestic violence legislation came into effect in 2011, but enforcement has been limited. While women's political representation increased to a record one-third of the lower house following the 2013 elections, women were appointed to just 2 of the 13 Senate seats.

Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)

X = Score Received

Y = Best Possible Score

Z = Change from Previous Year

[Full Methodology](#)